

## Today's News - Monday, February 24, 2014

- Kamin spent some serious time exploring the urbanization of China, and his 3-part report is a must-read (seriously!): "this is not a simple, happy story of East meets West. China is a laboratory where architects, urban planners, government officials and developers are concocting the urban future - both for better and for worse." (registration required)
- Hunter takes FT to task for a report that calls architects "cling-ons" surviving "only by the skin of our teeth. The profession needs to attract those with the best brains, not just the fattest wallets."
- Some architects are "miffed" at a new website where potential clients offer what seem to be very low-price fees for design jobs: "They fear it straps architects to the Internet's slave-labor machine" (but it's "gaining traction with clients").
- Saffron "laments" MoMA expansion plans: "New York is again suffering from a crisis of bigness. It needs to make room for the small"; DS+R was "suckered in by the institution's faulty logic."
- Pedersen begs to differ with those who say Gehry's Eisenhower Memorial is dead: "I'd take flawed-but-ambitious Gehry over generic statues in the park or, even worse, the stale classicism being offered up by the likes of the NCAS."
- Brookings' Katz and Wagner explain how city centers around the world are beating out the 'burbs by creating "innovation districts" to attract high-tech companies; even traditional science parks like North Carolina's Research Triangle "are scrambling to urbanize to keep pace with their workers' preference for walkable communities and their companies' desire to be near other firms."
- Ransford cheers the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association's Getting to Groundbreaking initiative: "What's most encouraging is that it focuses on supply as the answer to the affordability challenge."
- Wainwright cheers O'Donnell + Tuomey's LSE student center that is a "lesson in architectural origami - a fold-out marvel that ducks and dodges between its neighbors' rights to light."
- Altabe is not so cheered by Mecanoo's Birmingham library that "brings fettuccine to mind. The mass of metalwork also conjures up trusses and scaffolding - it looks like it's still under construction."
- Moore mulls the debate over the fate of "one of London's finest Victorian markets" as rivals "rubbish" each others' "rubbishings": "In a wise world a way might be found to have the best of both plans."
- Also in the wrecking ball's crosshairs is BBC's 1960s HQ in Wales - a supermarket has the site in its sights, but others would like to see it repurposed as is being done with BBC's 1950s Television Centre in west London.
- Architecture lovers have a new reason to visit Barcelona's "block of discord" as a "modernista gem" opens to the public.
- Cheers for the four recipients of AIA's 2014 Institute Honors for Collaborative Achievement (full disclosure: we are proud to have made a small contribution to AIANY's Post-Sandy Initiative).
- Quirk reports on Odile Decq launching a new kind of architecture school/institute in Lyon, France - Neuroscience and Social Action included (with a very long, convoluted name that starts with Confluence).
- Two we couldn't resist: "how architecture helped rebuild Lego": the company "has come to accept that each new release will be greeted with some degree of snarkiness" + Jones cheers The Lego Movie's "architectural superhero" - perhaps now it "should create Renaissance building kits too."
- Call for entries: UIA "Friendly Spaces Accessible to All" international award + 2014 Fritz Höger Award for Excellence in Brick Architecture (international).

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Designed in Chicago, Made in China: ...a fascinating and revealing look into China's urbanization and the role that Chicago architects are playing in the reshaping of China's cityscapes...this is not a simple, happy story of East meets West...Like Chicago more than a century ago, China is a laboratory where architects, urban planners, government officials and developers are concocting the urban future — both for better and for worse. By Blair Kamin & photographer John J. Kim -- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Helmut Jahn; Gensler; VOA Associates; Goettsch Partners; Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill; Perkins+Will; RTKL; etc. [images]- Chicago Tribune

We 'cling-ons' see our profession as a calling: In the FT's perjorative coinage, we are "cling-ons"; still middle class but only by the skin of our teeth...had nurtured a heroic self-image as a noble profession with an abiding social purpose...The profession needs to attract those with the best brains, not just the fattest wallets...the planet's huge environmental challenges are an aggregation of smaller problems that architects can help solve...My greatest hope is that our profession will find new strength ... By Will Hunter/Architectural Review/London School of Architecture [link to FT report]- Financial Times (UK)

Architects miffed at website that offers low-cost bids: arcbar.com has stirred some controversy. Industry professionals question the quality of the designs and lament the low-price rates. They fear it straps architects to the Internet's slave-labor machine...gaining traction with clients, though... [images]- Orange County Register (California)

Crit> MoMA Expansion: Inga Saffron laments the controversial plan by Diller Scofidio + Renfro to demolish the American Folk Art Museum building: New York is again suffering from a crisis of bigness. It needs to make room for the small...[DS+R] should have explored ways to invent a new, de-centralized kind of museum. No obsolete albatross, the small, intimate Folk Art may well represent the first inklings of what a modern New York museum can be.- The Architect's Newspaper

Frank Gehry's Eisenhower Memorial Not Dead, Yet: Despite the changes...the memorial's fundamental components remain in place, a defiant gesture sure to further rile up the opposition. Still, several commissioners expressed their approval...I'd take flawed-but-ambitious Gehry over generic statues in the park or, even worse, the stale classicism being offered up by the likes of the NCAS [National Civic Arts Society]. By Martin C. Pedersen [images, links]- Metropolis Magazine

Innovation districts appear in cities as disparate as Montreal and London: Campuses like Silicon Valley used to be the home of innovation but now city centres are where ideas are grown...Even traditional science parks...are scrambling to urbanise to keep pace with their workers' preference for walkable communities and their companies' desire to be near other firms. By Bruce Katz and Julie Wagner/Brookings- Guardian (UK)

Groundbreaking initiative focuses on increasing housing supply: Affordability crisis: Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association hopes the Getting to Groundbreaking initiative will provide some workable ideas on addressing the pressing housing needs in the region. What's most encouraging...is that it focuses on supply as the answer to the affordability challenge. By Bob Ransford- Vancouver Sun

LSE's new students' union: a lesson in architectural origami: In the Saw Swee Hock Student Centre, O'Donnell + Tuomey have produced a fold-out marvel that ducks and dodges between its neighbours' rights to light...It is a complex collage of things that are both rough and polished...it is "warehouse meets gentleman's club". By Oliver Wainwright [images]- Guardian (UK)

This 'People's Palace' seems overdressed: Maybe it's because Birmingham, England is known for a labyrinth of highways so convoluted that it resembles a plate of spaghetti, but the intricate metalwork jacketing the city's new library brings fettuccine to mind. The mass of metalwork also conjures up trusses and scaffolding...[it] looks like it's still under construction. By Joan Altabe -- Francine Houben/Mecanoo- Examiner

The battle to save Smithfield market: A controversial plan to turn one of London's finest Victorian markets into a £160m office and retail complex is the subject of a current public inquiry and the finely balanced rival claims of heritage and development...In a wise world a way might be found to have the best of both plans. By Rowan Moore -- John McAslan and Partners [images] - Observer (UK)

'Outstanding' Cardiff modernist building under threat: Twentieth Century Society backs listing bid for BBC Wales's 1960s HQ...Broadcasting House in Llandaff on the market...A supermarket is reportedly interested...pointed to the BBC's 1950s Television Centre in west London...being converted into homes and offices by AHMM, as an example of how retention could work. -- Dale Owen/Percy Thomas Partnership (1966) [images] - BD/Building Design (UK)

Casa Lleó i Morera opens to the public: Architecture lovers have a new reason to visit Barcelona...The Lluís Domènech-designed house forms part of the city's famed manzana de la discordia or "block of discord". The block earned its name due to the presence of three modernista gems by different architects: Casa Lleó i Morera, Casa Batlló by Antoni Gaudí and Casa Amatller by Josep Puig i Cadafalch... - Guardian (UK)

AIA selects Four Recipients for the 2014 Institute Honors for Collaborative Achievement -- ACE Mentor Program; National Building Museum; AIANY Post-Sandy Initiative: Building Better, Building Smarter; Rick Smith- American Institute of Architects (AIA)

Odile Decq to Launch A New Kind of Architecture Institute: The Confluence Institute for Innovation and Creative Strategies in Architecture...in Lyon, France...will be organized around...Neuroscience, New technologies, Social Action, Visual Art, and Physics...structured around contemporary questions that respond to social concerns; students are given the autonomy to construct their own research programs... By Vanessa Quirk - ArchDaily

Block party: how architecture helped rebuild: LEGO brings out the architect in all of us; but what has iconic architecture brought to LEGO? Because the sets are aimed at adults, LEGO has come to accept that each new release will be greeted with some degree of snarkiness. - Architecture & Design (Australia)

Michelangelo: The Lego Movie's architectural superhero: Lego Michelangelo is a refreshing addition to the animated posse who unites to save the world...perhaps Lego should create Renaissance building kits too. By Jonathan Jones - Guardian (UK)

Call for entries: UIA "Friendly Spaces Accessible to All" international award; deadline: March 31- International Union of Architects (UIA)

Call for entries: 2014 Fritz Höger Award for Excellence in Brick Architecture (international); new category: Young talent/Newcomers; cash prizes; deadline: April 30- Initiative Bauen mit Backstein / Brick Building Initiative

ANN Feature: Informed by Learning: Interview with Joe Valerio and Randy Mattheis about education for the future at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools: "We wanted to dive deeply into the culture of the school...so one of the first things we did was to participate in its daily life." -- Valerio Dewalt Train Associates - ArchNewsNow

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